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AUTHOR DeSue, Clarence E., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

Helping reduce the dropout rate and improving the school attendance of high-risk students who were under court sanction to attend school was the focus of this practicum conducted in a rural community in the northeast region of Florida. The project was necessary because: (1) existing youth services handled individuals adjudicated as delinquent without regard to barriers inherent in a rural community; and (2) the existing programs were insensitive to the specific educational needs of the group. The targeted group consisted of 8 students above the age of 15, who were in a school program or ordered to participate in a school program by the courts. Intervention strategies were used to encourage the students to continue their education while keeping the court rulings. These strategies included: (1) assessing the students' levels of progress through guidance; (2) educational and supportive counseling; (3) home visits with the parents; and (4) advocating for the students' needs in the school environment and community. The 10-week project provided the opportunity for coordinated services to the targeted youth, and for improving their enrollment and attendance. The goal of the program to have 40% of the students actively attending school or school work programs for 50% of the time, were accomplished, despite the withdrawal of three students for nonattendance. This document includes samples of forms and surveys and cites 15 references. (ALL)

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ED326369

IMPROVING THE ATTENDANCE AND PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS UNDER COURT ORDER TO ATTEND SCHOOL

by

Clarence E. DeSue, Jr.

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of
Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Educational Specialist.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
National Database System for reference.

July 1990

RC 017922

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ABSTRACT

Improving the attendance and performance of secondary students under court order to attend school.
DeSue Jr. Clarence E., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University/
Descriptors: Agency Cooperation/ Basic Skills'/ Communication Skills/
Academic Failure/ Community Resources/ Delinquent Behavior/
Delinquent Rehabilitation/ Youth Problems/ Youth Programs.

The practicum focused on methods designed to help reduce the dropout rate and improve attendence of high risk students (dropout), those who were under court sanction to attend school. The targeted group consisted of eight students above the age of 15, who were in a school program or ordered in a school program by the courts. Those students were not only identified, but intervention strategies for encouraging their continuation was utilized. These strategies included assessing the students level of progress through guidance, educational and supportive counseling, home visits with the parents, and advocating these youths needs in the school environment and community, to facilitate success. Statistical data reflected the overall percentage of each student's attendance while in the program.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledge such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed_____

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APPENDIX J

Nova University
Center For The Advancement of Education
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

Observer Verification Form

Verification of Particum Activity

Dear Observer:

Practicum students in Nova's M.S. and Ed.S. programs are asked to provide external verification that the project activities reported in their final practicum documents took place as described. You have been designated an observer to fulfill this confirmation function by the student named below. On this sheet, then, please write a note attesting to your knowledge of the project activity described in the final practicum report to which this will be attached. (Note that you are not asked to evaluate or make judgments about the quality of the project.)

Practicum Title Improving Attendance & Performance of Secondary Students Under Court Order to Attend School.

Student's Name Clarence DeSue

Program Site Bradford County Date July, 1990

Observer's Name Eugenia Whitehead Eugenia Whitehead
(please print----------and sign)

Observer's Position Supervisor Director of Student Services Phone # 904-964-6800

Observer's comments on impact of the project (handwritten):

This is to verify that Mr. DeSue actually completed the activity described in this report. According to his data, it appears that attendance did improve for the students as long as they were carefully monitored. But, once the monitoring stopped - the attendance rate dropped.

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Chapter I

PURPOSE

The target community of the practicum is located in the Northeast region of Florida, and in close proximity of several central cities in the Southeastern part of the United States; nearby are also several University towns offering higher learning. The County is rural, consisting of six small towns, three of which have formed their own townships. The total population of the target community is reflected as 24,120 people, with 13,696 males and 10,424 females.

"According to the Office of Elections (1989), approximately 75 percent of the County is white, 25 percent is nonwhite." Of this number, 9,735 comprised the total labor force in 1987 with an average wage and salary of $14,966.00. "Statistical data compiled by the area's Economic Council reflected the primary job sources in the area included the Correctional System, employing 1200 people, followed by the school system, with 497 people. As for agricultural crops, the area's major crops are beans, peas, greens, strawberries, and pecans. Other major production in the area includes two plants, mining minerals, and two sewing factories, producing clothing for ladies wear, or blue-collar workers. Also included among the top ten major producers is a major furniture company, manufacturing all types of household furniture.

Considering that 9,735 workers comprise the work force as indicated by a 1987 report from the Division of Economic Labor, the county is considered low economically. This deficit, added to the county's ad valorem millage rate of 15.506 and the taxable property percentage of 35.2 percent, suggests that the education system has limited resources, locally. The researcher notes there's little comparison with larger counties, considering that the county ranks 47th out of 67 counties in the state.

The total student count in the county, based on a 1989 student count by computer services, was 4,633 students. The district includes two elementary schools, two K-7 schools, one middle school, one junior high school,one high school and one vocational technical school.

The total school population of the targeted high school in 1988 was 1,138 students, inclusive of those students participating in vocational programs, part-time at the vocational center. The racial breakdown is 848 Whites, 287 Blacks, two Hispanics, and one American Indian. The male/female population is 532 total females and 606 total males. Of 1,362 students on free or reduced lunch in the county, there was a total of 221 students on this program at the high school.

Basic curriculum courses at the high school consist of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, performing arts, life management skills, and foreign languages. The school offers electives in courses such as Junior Reserve Officer

Training Corp (JROTC), drivers education, accounting, business computer operations, beginning tennis, television production, psychology, sociology, tennis, and other courses. In conjunction with the vocational program a student could also earn credits in brick and block masonry, cosmetology, accounting, welding, drafting, and auto mechanics. Academically talented students are offered 12th grade English honors, advanced American history, advanced world history, humanities, algebra II, chemistry, analytical geometry, trigonometry, computer programming and physics.

Staff of the target school consists of 58 faculty members, two librariáns, two guidance counselors, four administrators, and ten paraprofessionals. All faculty members hold at least a Bachelor's Degree, and in addition there are 28 percent holding Masters Degrees, with 3 percent holding Specialist Degrees.

The 1988 Student Assessment test (SAT) at the high school reflected slightly less than the state average. In reading, for example, the score was 82, compared to 89 in the state, and writing 82, as compared to 87 in the state. The communication and mathematics scores for this same year was 81 and 70 respectively, compared to the state's 88 average in communication and 80 in mathematics.

The vocational school, having an enrollment of 350 adult students, will also be utilized in the project. This school serves in the adult basic and secondary education. The educational component is designed for individuals reading at various levels. Under the

purview of adult education, the evening program offers three programs: general education development (GED), preparatory, designed for students who generally have proficient skills in general math, reading, social studies, writing, and science. The successful student has a grade level equivalent of at least an eighth grade education in these areas. Another component is the preparatory GED class, which focuses on those aforementioned areas within the range of fifth to eighth grade equivalent. Students are placed in this setting in preparation for the GED class. The adult basic education curriculum is a third component. This program is geared to individuals who have not obtained the basic skills. The grade ranges from second to fifth grade, with instruction being reinforced by the utilization of computers.

Vocational programs offered at the center are accounting/bookkeeping, automotive mechanics, heavy equipment operations, drafting, commercial vehicle driving, welding, agriculture production, nursery operations, practical business skills, word processing, nail sculpture, school bus driver training, air conditioning, heating and refrigeration, residential and commercial carpentry, heavy equipment and mechanics, masonry, cosmetology, agriculture, clerical office procedures. The school also offers numerous community education programs, including flower arranging, cake decorating, summer swimming and other vocational programs.

The day programs employs thirty instructors, which includes one guidance counselor and two occupational specialists. There are four paraprofessionals and two administrators also employed.

The evening program consists of one administrator, two counselors, seven vocational instructors, and three classroom instructors.

The project was established as a result of observing the process of how youth services handle individuals adjudicated delinquent without regard to barriers inherent within a rural community. These overlooked areas consist of obstacles in the group obtaining part-time employment due to lack of information, support or initiative. There also prevails a degree of insensitivity to the individual educational needs of the group.

Need for this project was also based upon a significant finding in establishing that there is a problem. The data, compiled by this researcher, focused on seven youths who were recently processed through the court system. Only one of the youth was from a household on subsidy through Health and Rehabilitative Services. The other working mothers all held jobs requiring no specialized skills or education beyond high school.

The expectation of the researcher was to be in a position to assess the progress of students who have entered the court system and have returned to school; and to identify and help guide youths who face the possibility of adjudication, but are likely to drop out of school. Furthermore, services that can be offered to these youths will be facilitated through the development of a better system of communication with agencies and the school officials.

The project had an important function related to attendance. The Program specifically, seeked to perform an integral part in providing coordinated services to the targeted youth; to include the

identification of these youths, and improving upon the enrollment and attendance of students, along with those who had dropped out. The goal, with treatment, was to have at least 40 percent participation, keeping the rate of dropouts under 60 percent. Based upon the problem description the following were objectives of the practicum:

(1) At least 40 percent of the youths would be in attendance at work or school at least 60 percent of the time, as measured through bimonthly attendance checks

(2) After 10 weeks in the program, there would be at least 50 percent total participation in either a work or education program, as measured by verification of attendance records, employment checks, and parental contacts.

The researcher's job role is termed "visiting teacher", working as liaison between the school and family, and primarily with students who are truant. These students will differ from those identified in the project inasmuch as they are under a compulsory attendance law to attend school. The responsibility of this job necessitates frequent contact with the student, home and occasionally, the criminal justice system.

Chapter II

RESEARCH AND SOLUTION STRATEGY

The results of a parental survey of seven adjudicated delinquent youths (Appendix A: Parental Survey) solidifies the existence of a problem in relation to this group. The data, taken from the parents of these youths by the researcher, indicate an astronomical school dropout rate of the group while still under court sanction. The survey and personal interview indicates that only one of the seven youths was in school approximately eight weeks after each were placed under community control supervision. Equally dismal was the information from parents that none of the youths had met the alternative provision of a work program, which means no members of the observed group of youths had been employed, either on a part-time or full-time basis, after the stated court provision. The lack of performance in these areas, ideally, should have been evident by the supervising agent and remedies pursued to help correct these deficiencies.

Unlike many large districts that can afford to establish and expend large amounts of monies on elaborate alternative education programs, the targeted school is limited to the imagination of those in leadership roles, willing to help promote innovative and action-oriented concepts. Limited interaction about these special needs

youths, however, can result in teachers being insensitive to their specific needs, or rejection by other students who may help set the stage for stereotyping. The lack of an advocate/counselor in a supportive role also isolates the student. The student inevitably quits school and loses any sense of direction.

Empey (1982) offers support to the researcher's theory. He observed that positive principles regarding delinquent behavior have shortfalls. They include "little insight into the feelings of alienation stigma, or the anger which delinquents feel." (pg 297)

Consequently, the court ordered provisions are less meaningful. Juvenile facilities are faced with overcrowding and priority on placement of offenders who have committed delinquent acts are placed in commitment. Nevertheless, the court sanctions should be meaningful in order to impress upon the youth the importance of responsibility, and the consequences for unfulfilled court mandates. Furthermore, when responses to reported violations are used to guide the youth in a positive direction, the school system can hopefully, be perceived as supportive Bell and Thompson observed "When supervised release becomes unsupervised, its effectiveness is significantly reduced" (pg. 416).

Other school districts of similar size have experienced a number of problems with certain needs of these at-risk youths in view of the lack of continuity. Due to the right to confidentiality, many youth service areas have been unable to share information about

these youths. Furthermore, notwithstanding this problem, youth services are burdened by massive case loads, which therefore increases the likelihood of the lack of follow-up.

For these reasons, another aspect of the communication process is essential. This process involves the promotion of the students' success, which is achieved through the supervising agency linking with the parents. Unfortunately, the target district has not utilized this practice.

The parental survey conducted by the researcher also indicates that there was minimal communication or guidance offered by youth services after the initial session with the student and parent, which would served to explain the court provision. Further evidence of a gap between the adjudicated youth, parents, and school, in reference to this group was noted during the survey. For example, one youth had attended vocational school two days of three weeks and was terminated from probation without violation. The survey results also included three youths who completed neither the school or employment provision of their probation, but were terminated successfully without any contact with their counselor. Conversely, two other youths returned to juvenile detention for new delinquent charges. Another youth, who had attended a preparatory General Educational Development (GED) class, had not seen his case worker within three weeks after release from detention.

Based on a 1989 Follow-up study by the researcher of ajudicated youths, it was determined that the dropout rate among this group of

ex-students was 87 percent. These youths had all reached 16 at the time of their adjudication but had been court ordered to attend school or obtain employment. The alarming high rate of dropouts exists for several reasons. Most states have a mandatory compulsory attendance law which has a minimum age for enrollment and a maximum age for required attendance. Florida has established its maximum required age at 16. As a result, many students with the support and approval of their parents, elect to dropout of school, often expecting that departing from the educational system will enhance their life styles.

The problem is compounded by the absence of a referral process at the school level. Students who are not identified, obviously, cannot have academic/personal needs addressed. Analysis of the survey would also point toward this deficiency.

The problem of lack of communication by the school with other local agencies is not isolated to the targeted district. An opinion survey conducted in five surrounding school districts by the researcher also pinpoints this problem (Appendix B: school survey). The reader should refer to Table I for a summary of the district responses to communication/follow-up procedures. Table I is followed by Table II which indicates the targeted districts lack of using community resources, also a large part of the communication process. Please note when referring to Table I, each county surveyed is represented by numbers one thru six; the information should be read horizontally. Table II gives the responses of three local agencies surveyed, also to be read horizontally.

TABLE I
Summary of Communication/Follow-up Procedure

County	J C Rep. (school)	F U System (yes)	F U System (no)	R/T	Coord. Service
1	no	x		yes	yes
2	yes	x		yes	yes
3	no		x	no	no
4	no		x	no	no
5	no		x	no	no
6	no		x	no	no

J C Rep (school) - Juvenile Court Representative (School)
F U System - Follow-up System
R/T - Retrieval/Tracking
Coord. Service - Coordinated Services

TABLE II

Utilizing Local Community Resources In
Achieving Work/School Related Provisions

	Judicial	Yes/No
A.	Referral to specific school personnel after adjudication	x
B.	An assigned school/court liaison	x
C.	School input about adjudicated youth	x

	Job Service	Yes/No	C C	Yes/No	JTPA	Yes/No
a.	Referral from HRS/school	x		x		x
b.	Knowledge of any student/ youth under court provision for work	x		x		x
c.	Lack of cooperative effort in assisting adj. youths	x		x		x
d.	Information sharing with other agencies concerning youth	x		x		x

---

Job S. - Job Service
C C - Chamber of Commerce
JTPA - Job Training Partnership Act

In a report by Milliken and Urich (1976), it was pointed out that the problem was identified two decades ago by the 1970 Joint Commission. They recommended "that a system of community Ombudsmen be developed, coordinating the efforts of the school and various community agencies such as police, Juvenile Court, Clergy, PTA, Chamber of Commerce, and Medical groups" (pg 60). The Commission added "the approach could serve as a means to break down the feeling that many troubled parents have".

Hopewell Public Schools also developed an inter agency prevention team that work together to solve problems. Concerns address by the agencies cited were "first... worrying that exchanging confidential information about a student would expose them to lawsuits. Second, the realization that time and money would be spent more efficiently if students in grades K-7 were concentrated on" (Bage, 1989, pg. 16).

Our system of bureaucracy has placed restrictions on changes positively affecting youth. Consequently, many barriers have confronted youth who are undereducated and found by the courts delinquent. These limitations have often resulted in recidivism, and ultimately have led to adult incarceration that would have been minimized, had there been a coordinated effort to communicate between the school, community, parents, courts, and youth services. Retired Judge Frank Orlando observed . . . ."What's happening is delinquents are falling through the cracks" Sun, (1990).

Research has focused not only on the fragmentation of youth services, but also has pointed toward limitations of the educational system in the area:

> Often narrow school reforms, methods, and technologies are ballyhooed as the silver bullet that will save the day. If children will only work harder, do more homework, and attend more hours a day, the system of the public will be saved. Never mind the differences in learning styles, backgrounds, abilities, and disabilities that children bring to school from an immense diversity of homes and communities (Treanor, 1988, pg 14).

The net result, when parents and schools did not reach this group, has invariably paved the way for unskilled workers to enter the labor market by mere chance. This dilemma is rein-forced by the uneducated who encounter hopelessness through unemployment, and crime. According to a 1988 report by Stewart Mott Foundation, it was found from 13 problem areas that the result of schools not reaching this group invariably paved the way for unemployment due to students being unskilled and undereducated.

They include the following:

> Discrete, scattered initiatives on behalf of at-risk youth can be found in all of the states, but often they are funded on a pilot basis without guarantees that success will result in funding for either continuation or replication.
>
> Lack of public concern for the problems of at-risk youth stands as a barrier to building comprehensive approaches to serving them.
>
> The potential to serve at-risk youth through federally funded Job Training Partnership Act - the nation's current national effort at job training and employment has not been fully realized in the majority of the states . . .

> In many states, information about programs for at-risk youth is not shared at the state level or between the state and local levels.
>
> . . . There is no system of evaluating and monitoring programs undertaken . . . other than nationally sponsored programs that are limited in scope (Mott Foundation, 1981, pg 1).

Jackson pointed to the despair which have confronted youths who are at risk. It was observed that not only was there an astronomical drop-out rate but typical among this group were factors such as teenage pregnancy, chronic unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, and suicide. This syndrome reinforces the "feeling of hopelessness and consequently, has precipitated a growing underclass which circumvents the opportunity for youth (Jackson, 1987, pg 2).

Considering that there might be any number of sociological or possibly psychological factors attributable to delinquency, solutions would need to be varied. For example, a youth who is suicidal and delinquent would "need immediate crisis intervention through a physician, school specialist, mental health professional or other knowledgeable person" (Florida Department of Law Enforcement report, 1985, pg 140). Conversely, there is not a crisis intervention strategy for the youth who commits a burglary or theft as a result of being from a very low socioeconomic background.

Varied solutions must extend beyond youth services simply working with one single agency or the school system working only with youth services in assisting these youths to become successful. Jackson makes a strong argument for "government, public and private

educational institutions, labor unions and community organizations to work in a cooperative spirit as opposed to a vacuum" (1987, pg 17). Thus, an emphasis on collaboration and coordination with various community agencies is necessary.

Another study focused on the impact of such a link. Miller (1983) indicated how student evaluations of services were positive in the Upward Reach project. This project was developed through the Atlantic Community College and functioned as a youth Corps program. "The program was designed for youths between ages 16 and 25, which included a comprehensive work study experience for out-of school youth" (pg 1). An important aspect was to assist those youth in dealing with certain problems in their home, community and with peers, while promoting student success in school and work. The linkage between this model and other community agencies was developed through a community service project component. "There were on-going services provided with probation officers, employment assistance, and at school. Students were exposed to persuasive motivational strategies (e.g. typing activities to the real world) in school." They also learned the importance of work ethic and the ability to build positive human relationships.

From this project three recommendations were made that will be incorporated in this researcher's project. These areas include the following:

> Project staff should begin working with students. . . and preparing to begin planning their educational program before being released from institutions.

An employment component should be provided for . . .

> A full-time staff liaison person should continue to be provided in each school to work with instructional returnees and students active with the Juvenile Court (Miller, 1983, pg 7).

The researcher purposely excluded radical approaches from this project in hopes of minimizing the overburden system of bureaucracy. Moreover, the research selected seems to point toward strategies which will increase the likelihood of success in these youths. These strategies involves a front-line approach in identifying these youth, then proposing or negotiating tangible incentives to help keep them in school or work.

Given the role of the school with various factions, there would seem to be validity in the assertion by Reed (1986) that "society cannot change the juvenile justice system" (pg 1). As advocate, however, on behalf of youths, the school representative's will become

> Supportive facilitator, helping to guide the youth toward important objectives. Positive gains can be made through observing school attendance, academic achievement, and instances of delinquency in these students at the school setting (Jenkins, Hieldeman and Caputo, 1985, pg 142).

Additional research which includes similar studies incorporates a message of humanistic approaches in helping to guide these type youths. Similar projects that have emerged include the following:

(1) "The program developed at Clackamas Community College, Oregon (1986) called the Vocational Options Program" (pg 3). The

program was designed for high-risk youth focusing on affective skills, pre-employment training, specific job skill training employment training, specific job skill training, employment placement, and independent living. Part I of the program focuses on young people in Clackamas County who had dropped out of traditional vocational education programs, and who showed such barriers as a attitudinal and behavioral to employment. Part II gave a description of the vocational options program, linkages with various agencies, flow of services, and the budgets. Part III offered outcome results, positive rates of termination; a review of solutions; problems related to referral and assignment; and an assessment of original goals and noteworthy successes.

(2) The Career Exploration Program was a summer outreach program for high-risk youth between 16 and 21. This structured program focused on high school dropouts, and juvenile ex-offenders in seven urban demonstration sites across the country.

> Participants were provided with group opportunities exploring vocational and career options; and developed job readiness skills. The objectives included helping participants clarify occupational interests and aspirations so that the youth would remain or return to school or seek meaningful employment, in addition to reducing recidivision among youth offenders. Participants were exposed to classroom instruction, personal and vocational counseling, on-site work experiences, and follow-up activities (Holmes, 1982, pg 12-13).

(3) The school/community guidance program alternatives for at-risk students. This program was a state authorized program developed in the Austin Independent School District of Texas.

> "The program provided services to delinquent students to decrease both their disruptive behavior and contact with the court system. The program sought to reduce factors contributing to truancy, academic failure, dropping out, and delinquency through instruction, counseling and home/school liaison (school/community guidance program 1984. pg 13)."

These are but only a few programs which have been utilized at various times in different parts of the nation. In addressing the economic, social, and psychological loss due to escalating crime rates, educating the "at-risk" youth is a viable option to the perpetual cycle of dropping out of school and committing crimes. The level of success for this group will ultimately, be the responsibility of the school, community, parent, and youth.

This writer utilized a strategy similar to the Upward Reach Project, which was developed through the Atlantic Community College in New Jersey. The importance of using a model similar to Upward Reach was to provide services that would result in regular contact with the family of the student, through the home visitation concept. Services through this approach were expanded by working with the court system, students, and other agencies, while providing service continuity. In the final analysis, cooperative efforts were improved with these factions.

Chapter III

METHODS

During week one, commencing the first week of March, students to be treated were identified through Court docket sheets. Permission from the juvenile judge, and juvenile clerk, was obtained beforehand, specifically covering October 1989 thru February 1990. Youths were selected from the lists randomly, one for each month, with two being selected from February's list. Following this process was the scheduling, then visiting the home where objectives of the program were communicated to the parents or guardians. All of the parents were receptive to the program's objectives. As a result, each one required to do so, signed the parental consent form (Appendix C).

Three youths were actually persuaded into returning to school by the researcher, through verbal communication. These youths, due to the length of lapse time from the high school, were placed in evening programs at the vocational center. Offering for these students consisted of a General Educational Development (GED) Program for one student, who tested out with a 7.5 literacy level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The other two students, also administered the TABE by the guidance counselor, were placed in a prepatory GED program, to remediate basic deficiencies. The remaining students were in attendance at the high school, two of whom were in exceptional educational programs.

In week two, the researcher continued with home visits and obtained the remaining three parental consent forms. Much emphasis was on opening lines of communication with students by establishing rapport. This lead to the utilization of the data sheet, (Appendix D) which proved useful in assessing individual needs of students, and their attitude toward success. The eight students were each agreeable to participating in the program. As a result, the researcher established a system of checking attendance of students at the high school and vocational school. Developing rapport with guidance counselors of each school also enabled the researcher to maintain two-way communication with both schools.

Week number three provided the researcher an opportunity to enter verbal contracts with students, to help improve or maintain attendance. The verbal contracts also helped facilitate the entering of written agreements with three students. Two of the three students entered attendance agreements of 45 days (Appendix E) in order to retain their driver's license. The other student was persuaded by the researcher to enter an attendance agreement in order to qualify for a driver's license.

The attendance agreements and verbal agreements were established by a combination of home visits, and communicating with counselors and administrators at both schools. Through this process, the attendance agreements were effectuated through the signature of a designated school representative. Staff at each school exhibited a

willingness to cooperate with students and to help with objectives of the program.

Re-evaluation and assessment was performed in week four. As a result, one student in the possession of a driver's license and under attendance agreement was identified, due to poor attendance. The notification to suspend letter (Appendix F) was mailed to the student and legal guardian of student by the guidance office.

Another instance of re-evaluation occurred with one student at the high school. The guidance counselor observed how student had difficulty adjusting and had repeatedly been referred to the Dean's office. In meeting with the dean, guidance counselor, and teacher, it became evident that student's multiple discipline referrals originated from this one class. As a result, student's schedule was changed.

Counseling was provided to all students under treatment; however, additional time was allotted to those students who were in noncompliance to required attendance. Three students were observed not meeting the objectives, two at the evening vocational school, and one at the high school. Inasmuch the student at the high school had multiple social problems (drug abuse, family instability, violating curfew requirements) a referral through verbal communication was initiated to the appropriate Health and Rehabilitative Counselor, who subsequently made a home visit.

In week five, the researcher provided a verbal progress report to various divisions of Health and Rehabilitative Services. These

divisions were the Juvenile Aftercare Program, Juvenile Alternative Services Program, Non-Secure Home Detention Program, and the Community Control Service Program. In these programs a designated counselor was assigned to work with students.

There was one instance of verbally reporting a student's progress to the juvenile judge, prior to disposition of charges. In another situation, the researcher initiated written communication (Appendix G) to the public defender of a student who had been in compliance with the program's objective. This communication was necessary so that the courts could take into account the student's progress before sentencing.

There was only one student under the project whose required community service hours (Appendix H) was addressed. This was in the amount of 20 hours, as stipulated by the courts. In view of the student's full schedule, (work, vocational and academic) the researcher assisted the student in developing a tentative work study plan through evening staff at the vocational center (night janitor, Adult Coordinator).

In week six, there were two separate meetings held with the guidance counselor, who was also designated as the Countywide Work-study Coordinator for economically disadvantaged students. In another instance, the researcher held a meeting with the Job Training Program Act (JTPA) Supervisor to offer assistance in securing employment for a student. Each of these students had been meeting objectives of the program through attendance.

One of the three students had little difficulty being placed in a workstudy program; however, the other student's case had to be placed before an interagency council. Through the advocacy of council members, including the Director of Exceptional Education, and the Director of Vocational Education Programs, committee members were persuaded into placing student in an evening slot at one of the elementary schools. Other council members consisted of two guidance counselors from the vocational school, and high school, the Director of and Industries Program, and a representative of Health and Rehabilitative Services.

For those students who were not meeting the attendance component, supportive counseling with a directive approach was used. Situations included offering an incentive to an exceptional education student of mainstreaming one class to a regular class; and, offering an employment option to another student. The directive approach included verbalizing the consequences of lack of attendance through, a) the loss of driver's license, b) withdrawal from high school for non-attendance, as required by school board policy.

During week number seven, another adjustment had to be made in the schedule of two students. One case involved a high school student who was failing math. The student was offered an after-school tutoring program, to remediate this deficiency and giving a chance to elevate the grade up to a D. Those staff members assisting in this placement were the guidance counselor, and coordinator of Chapter 1 programs. The other student, in attendance at the vocational school, had developed a pattern of complaining about the

teacher. Once this situation was communicated to guidance a change was made in the student's program. This change included all day classes, with a different teacher in student's basic education classes.

Four of the eight students were observed in the various classroom setting by the researcher, with teachers being apprised of the visit, beforehand. In only one instance, was there a report of sleeping in class and non-performance by a student, who was enrolled at the vocational Center. This student was conferenced with by the teacher, guidance counselor, and Dean of Students, in reference to the low performance level. Two other students observed at their part-time work programs had no problems and received favorable reports.

In week eight, one student had been directed toward completing the Community Service (Appendix H) portion of the court order. Another student had been encouraged to return to school, despite having only missed passing the practice GED test by 25 points. The other option offered was the loss of licenses to drive. Another student was directed to improve attendance in tutoring or face the possibility of retention in ninth grade. The exemplary student, a special education student at the high school, was directed toward a summer work program and remained highly motivated and successful throughout the program. Another high school student was referred to the JTPA Summer Youth Program, due to compliance of attendance objectives. The other student, in preparation of GED classes, was

also encouraged to continue with the class, despite being ineligible to take the GED by only 16 points. The remaining two students, at this point, had been withdrawn from school, due to non-attendance.

Week number nine of the program included a combination of home visits and telephone calls to parents. All parents were interviewed, and satisfied with the efforts made by school officials in helping to keep youths in school. Parents of students not successful, due to non-attendance, attributed the students failure to factors such as peer pressure, lack of motivation, and their loss of influence as parents. One of the guardians of a student indicated the problem of failure stemmed from the child's exposure to drugs by a parent.

Week number ten was utilized by seeking opinions from teachers and students about the program. Five teachers, two guidance counselors, and one paraprofessional were interviewed individually, in informal meetings. They unanimously endorsed the efforts made in the project and cited a willingness to help with similar projects. Teachers especially were appreciative of information sharing on specific home and school problems related to individual students.

Of those students interviewed, six of the eight held favorable opinions about the project. These students believed the school acted in support of their best interests. The other two students did not hold favorable opinions about the actions of the school. For example, one of the students believed school officials had used harrassing techniques to reach its objective. The other student thought teachers and students were non-supportive, despite the student's recruitment from dropout status by a school representative.

Log Sheets (Appendix I) were used to record actions on each student. The log sheets also provided a basis for giving verbal summations of students to the appropriate division of HRS. More importantly, it acted as a guide to help monitor attendance and progress of students.

In summary, this practicum ran smoothly throughout the treatment period. The cooperation of school staff was extensive and played an important part in the project's success. Furthermore, the numerous contacts and follow-ups consumed an amazing number of hours and resulted in excess of 70 such contacts through verbal communications.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

One objective of the practium was that 40 percent of youths would be in school or work at least 60 percent of the time, as measured through bi-monthly attendance checks.

Objective one of the proposal was achieved, with no less than sixty two (62%) percent student participation in a school program or combined school work program. In determining the percentage, each student was assigned a 12.5 percent equivalent. Thus, 12.5 times 5 students (enrolled at the end of the program) would equal the total percentage of student participation. The reader should also note that dropouts in the program were the result of students A, D, and G who were withdrawn for nonattendance.

Withdrawals by the school occurred at three different time-frames during the program. For instance, student A was withdrawn the last week of the project, as a result of six consecutive evenings of non-attendance. Student D was withdrawn after six consecutive evenings of non-attendance, but during the midpoint of the project. Student G was dropped after attending only five days within a six-week's grading period. The reader should note the differences in the days of school operations with students A, D, at the vo-tech., compared to the student at the high school. In the vocational school, the evening classes were held only twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., whereas the

high school operated five days a week, from 8:10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This should be taken into account when analyzing Table III.

Referring to Table III (read across) a breakdown of the students attenadance is given with corresponding percentages below each category labeled absences and days present.

ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS

	Number Absences (Percentage)	Days Present (Percentage)	Possible Days in Attendance
Student A	9 (45%)	*11 (55%)	20
Student B	19 (61%)	*12 (34%)	31
Student C	20** (65%)	*11 (35%)	31
Student D	15 (83%)	* 3 (16%)	18
Student E	6 (12%)	44 (88%)	50
Student F	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	50
Student G	3 (6%)	47 (94%)	50
Student H	45 (90%)	5 (10%)	50
Total Days	140 (47%)	160 (53%)	300

E denoted student with excused absences
* Evening Vocational Program equals two nights per week
** Student with varied schedule consisting of evening program and day Vocational program

The results of adding each score, totaling and dividing the total days possible in attendance by number absences/presences, is the percentage.

The second objective of the practicum was there would be 50 percent student participation in a work or education program as measured by verification of attendance records, employment checks, and parental contacts.

Objective number two was achieved and at the end of the program, there was sixty-two percent student participation. This amounted to five students active in an educational program. The percentage was calculated based on the total number students enrolled in the program at the beginning of treatment, divided by those who were officially enrolled on attendance records.

Similar to the youths in the earlier study, youths in this project were selected randomly. More importantly,only five of the students in the project were actually enrolled in a school program at the beginning of treatment. The other students were recruited by the researcher, as outlined in the methodology section of this paper.

With the exception of student H, who attended school only 10 percent of the time under treatment, there was no appreciable difference in the attendance of students E or G, before or during treatment. Likewise, student F attendance improved by only a margin of two percent, compared to his attendance before treatment. This improvement can be attributable to fewer suspensions from the ten weeks prior to treatment.

The objectives were accomplished largely through the cooperation of staff in the school system. More importantly, the attempt to reach these youths by exhibiting a caring attitude played an important part. Equally important was pointing youths to community resources as a means to encourage their success.

Chapter V

RECOMMENDATION

The program should definitely be continued, despite minor setbacks that confronted the researcher of such a project. Whereas local researchers, based on a 1989 follow-up study revealed a 87 percent dropout rate of a similar group that was studied, the dropout rate of this group treated showed a dropout rate of only 38 percent at the end of treatment. It is worthnoting that three of these youths were actually counseled into returning to school by using such incentives as work and the Driver' License Law.

The writer plans to make available copies of this practicum to local school board members and administrators, and will suggest this approach as a viable means to expensive alternative education programs. It will also be suggested that this might be included as part of the existing Dropout Prevention Program. Finally, of those school districts surveyed, the results of this study will be shared with professionals in roles as school based guidance counselors, and Social workers and teachers.

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APPENDIX A

PARENTAL SURVEY

APPENDIX A
Parent Survey

1. Has your son/daughter been counseled about educational opportunities? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, by which representative: 1) HRS worker ____, 2) School worker ____, 3) Other ____.

2. Has your son/daughter been counseled about how he/she might work toward their goal while under court supervision? Yes ____, No ____.

3. How many times do you expect to see school representative in a supportive role? _____.

4. How many times do you expect to see other representatives in a supportive role? _____.

5. Have the conditions of the court provisions been explained by a counselor as they relate to school or work? Yes ____, No ___

6. Has a referral been made for your son/daughter to attend: a) High School ____; b) Employment Agency ____; c) Vo-Tech ___ d) Other ____.

Please enter the number reflecting your actual experience.

0	1	2	3
Never	Seldom	Often	All the Time

____ I have shared information with other agencies.

____ I have been visited/contacted by phone by other agencies concerning my son/daughter.

____ I have received the support of the school system.

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL SURVEY

APPENDIX B

School Survey

1. Is a person designated by the school district to attend Juvenile Court in your district on a regular basis: Yes ____ No ____

2. Does your district or school have a system for routinely following-up on youths 16 or older who have the court provision to attend school, but drop out? Yes ____ No ____

3. How many youths in the aforementioned category are counseled by you or a member of your staff regarding the required court provision? If not applicable, indicate _____ _____.

4. Is there a retrieval program in your district for encouraging youth above 16 to return to school? Yes ____ No ____

5. Are services offered by the school district, HRS, Job Services, courts and businesses coordinated so that 16 year old delinquents who drop out are provided with incentives to return to school? Yes ____ No ____.

6. Do you believe school districts, with the cooperation of agencies such as HRS, Job Services, Juvenile Courts, and Chamber of Commerce, should make an effort to reach this group through job opportunities? Yes ____ No ____ We already have one ____

7. Do you see a need for an initiative to reach this group of drop-outs? Yes ____ No ____ We already have one ____.
8. Is there in existence a tracking system for following up with youths in this category? Yes ____ No ____.

9. Do you believe the responsibility for counseling and follow-up of these youths should be left solely with a single agency? Yes ____ No ____.

10. Can more be done for these "high risk" students by improving internal and external communications in your district? Yes ____ No ____ Some improvement noted ____.

Please enter the number reflecting your experience regarding these 16 year old drop-outs.

0	1	2	3
Never	Seldom	Often	All the time

_____ I share information with other agencies.

_____ Other agencies share information with me.

_____ I need the cooperation of other agencies.

_____ I share information with the youth and parents to encourage involvement in education.

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX C

PARENT CONSENT

I,_____, give information freely and voluntarily, and authorize Mr. C. DeSue to make any general inquiry that would help my son/daughter obtain employment, or encourage him/her back into the school environment.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Date

Agree to:_____ _____

C. DeSue Date

APPENDIX D

DATA SHEET

DATA SHEET

1. Do you plan to remain in school?_____

2. What type of grades are you making in school?_____
   What were your grades in the past?_____

3. Have you set any goals after finishing school?_____

4. What do your parents do for a living?_____

5. If under court supervision, how do you plan to meet court condition?_____

6. How can the school help you meet your conditions?_____

7. Do you plan on working full or part-time while attending school?
   _____

8. Will you work full-time and drop out of school?_____

9. Do you understand the provision of your court conditions?_____

10. Do you understand the possible consequences of not working or attending school?_____

11. If you have community supervision , how will you obtain your work community hours?_____

12. Other Comments-_____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

APPENDIX E

STUDENT AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

APPENDIX E

STUDENT AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

I, _____, with the help of my teachers and other school staff, agree to take part in class activities and work on class assignments. I also agree that it is my responsibility to attend school regularly and to promote a positive atmosphere at school. I agree not to be absent without an excuse as defined in the Student Code of Conduct for 3/5 (consecutive/cumulative) school days from the beginning of the agreement.

The school agrees the student in meeting class assignments, provide counseling sessions upon request and inform the student of his/her progress.

_____ _____
Student Signature Date

_____ _____
School Signature Date

_____ _____
Parents Signature Date

Agreement Expires: _____

Successfully Completed: ____ / _____ ____ / _____
YES / DATE NO / DATE

APPENDIX F

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO SUSPEND LICENSE

APPENDIX F

Notification to Student of Intent to
Request the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to
Suspend Driver's License

This is to Notify:

_____
Student's Full Legal Name
(First, Middle, Last)

_____
Mailing Address

_____

Date of Birth:____/____/____ Sex:_____

of the _____School or School District's intent to request requirements of s.322.0601, F.S., relative to enrollment and attendance and, hereby informs you that you have 15 calendar days from receipt of this notice to request a hearing, for the purpose of appealing this pending action, or meet the requirements of s.322.0601(1), F.S. for enrollment and attendance. (s.322.0601(1), F.S. requirements on reverse side of this document)

School:_____

School District:_____

Authorized Signature:_____, Title:_____

Date:_____/_____/_____

For Additional Information Call:

Name:_____
Name:_____
Title:_____
Address:_____
_____
Phone Number:_____

To Submit a Request for a hearing, mail the request to:

Title:_____
Address:_____
_____

cc: Parent or Guardian

APPENDIX G

NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT IN JTPA

APPENDIX G

Dear _____:

Above referenced student will soon appear for alleged drug charges. Please have the courts take into consideration the student's attempt to obtain employment through the local JTPA agency. In fact, student was about to commence employment at _____, when he was arrested on a drug charge.

He is currently enrolled in the Summer Youth Program where he has an excellent chance for obtaining employment.

Sincerely,

_____
Researcher

APPENDIX H

COURT ORDERED CONDITIONS

APPENDIX H

ORDER OF DISPOSITION

Based on the petition filed on the _____, Assistant State Attorney, the child, _____, being duly represented by _____, his attorney of record, and having previously,

_____(a) been found guilty at an adjudicators hearing of the following crimes,

_____(b) entered a plea of guilty to the following crimes,

_____(c) entered a plea of nolo contendre to the following crimes,

COUNT	CRIME	OFFENSE	DEGREE

The predispositional study prepared by HRS was received and considered, as was all other relevant and material evidence offered, and no cause having been shown why the child should not be sentenced at this time, it is therefore

ORDERED and ADJUDGED that:

____ Adjudication of delinquency is withheld in this case.

____ The child is adjudicated delinquent.

Said child is hereby:

____ Placed on Community Control under the supervision of the Juvenile Alternative Services Program with the conditions enumerated in paragraphs (B) and (C) below:

____ Placed on Community Control under the supervision of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services with the conditions enumerated in paragraphs (B) and (C) below:

____ Committed to the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services according to paragraph (A) below and upon release to be placed on Community Control under the conditions enumerated in paragraphs (B) and (C) below.

A. PLACEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Pursuant to Florida Statutes 39.09(3)(e), placement is recommended in the following orders:

1. 2.

3.

B. The placement is for an indeterminate period but no longer than:

____ a. The nineteenth birthday.

____ b. The maximum sentence allowable by law.

____ c. Until otherwise released and discharged therefrom, whichever first occurs.

C. PROVISIONS OF COMMUNITY CONTROL

It is further ORDERED that said child shall comply with the following sanctions:

1. Do not violate any laws of the State of Florida or be charged with a violation of any laws.

2. Attend school every day, each class assigned unless excused by school authorities relating to conduct and citizenship in and around school grounds and while coming to and leaving from school, or maintain full-time employment if you are 16 years of age or over.

3. You shall not have in your possession weapons of any kind throughout supervision.

4. Do not change your place of residence without prior knowledge and consent of your Community Control counselor.

5. Do not use intoxicants, nor visit places where intoxicant, drugs or other dangerous substances are sold, despensed, or used.

6. Obey the reasonable demands of your parent(s) or guardian(s).

SPECIAL PROVISIONS
(Check where applicable)

___1. You shall maintain a curfew of.

___2. You shall make restitution in the amount of to.

___3. You shall participate in alcohol, drug, and/or mental health programs as directed by your Community Control counselor.

___4. **You shall perform 20 hours of Community Service work without pay.**

___5. **You shall have no contact with the victim of this case.**

___6. You shall participate in a tour of an adult correctional facility.

___7. **You shall write a letter of apology to the victim of this case.**

___8. You shall write an essay assignment as directed by the Court.

___9. Other Conditions: Pursue and obtain GED requirements.

The parties are advised that an appeal is authorized by law within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order.

DONE and ORDERED in _____,

this _____ day of _____, nuc pro tunc as of the _____

_____.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE LOG SHEET OF CONTACT PER STUDENT

APPENDIX I

Sample Log Sheet of Contact

	STUDENT Week 1	STUDENT Week 2	STUDENT Week 3	STUDENT Week 4	STUDENT Week 5	STUDENT Week 6	STUDENT Week 7	STUDENT Week 8	STUDENT Week 9	STUDENT Week 10
Home Visit										
Initinl Intake										
TABE										
Community Contact										
Counseling Session										
Juvenile Court Hearing										
Other Referrel										
Attendance Check										

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE LOG SHEET OF CONTACT PER STUDENT

APPENDIX I

Sample Log Sheet of Contact

	STUDENT Week 1	STUDENT Week 2	STUDENT Week 3	STUDENT Week 4	STUDENT Week 5	STUDENT Week 6	STUDENT Week 7	STUDENT Week 8	STUDENT Week 9	STUDENT Week 10
Home Visit										
Initial Intake										
TABE										
Community Contact										
Counseling Session										
Juvenile Court Hearing										
Other Referrel										
Attendance Check										

Appendix 16

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991